

## § 303.422

## 34 CFR Ch. III (7–1–13 Edition)

(b) *Content of notice.* The notice must be in sufficient detail to inform parents about—

(1) The action that is being proposed or refused;

(2) The reasons for taking the action; and

(3) All procedural safeguards that are available under this subpart, including a description of mediation in §303.431, how to file a State complaint in §§303.432 through 303.434 and a due process complaint in the provisions adopted under §303.430(d), and any timelines under those procedures.

(c) *Native language.* (1) The notice must be—

(i) Written in language understandable to the general public; and

(ii) Provided in the native language, as defined in §303.25, of the parent or other mode of communication used by the parent, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.

(2) If the native language or other mode of communication of the parent is not a written language, the public agency or designated EIS provider must take steps to ensure that—

(i) The notice is translated orally or by other means to the parent in the parent's native language or other mode of communication;

(ii) The parent understands the notice; and

(iii) There is written evidence that the requirements of this paragraph have been met.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1439(a)(6)–(7))

### SURROGATE PARENTS

#### § 303.422 **Surrogate parents.**

(a) *General.* Each lead agency or other public agency must ensure that the rights of a child are protected when—

(1) No parent (as defined in §303.27) can be identified;

(2) The lead agency or other public agency, after reasonable efforts, cannot locate a parent; or

(3) The child is a ward of the State under the laws of that State.

(b) *Duty of lead agency and other public agencies.* (1) The duty of the lead agency, or other public agency under paragraph (a) of this section, includes the assignment of an individual to act

as a surrogate for the parent. This assignment process must include a method for—

(i) Determining whether a child needs a surrogate parent; and

(ii) Assigning a surrogate parent to the child.

(2) In implementing the provisions under this section for children who are wards of the State or placed in foster care, the lead agency must consult with the public agency that has been assigned care of the child.

(c) *Wards of the State.* In the case of a child who is a ward of the State, the surrogate parent, instead of being appointed by the lead agency under paragraph (b)(1) of this section, may be appointed by the judge overseeing the infant or toddler's case provided that the surrogate parent meets the requirements in paragraphs (d)(2)(i) and (e) of this section.

(d) *Criteria for selection of surrogate parents.* (1) The lead agency or other public agency may select a surrogate parent in any way permitted under State law.

(2) Public agencies must ensure that a person selected as a surrogate parent—

(i) Is not an employee of the lead agency or any other public agency or EIS provider that provides early intervention services, education, care, or other services to the child or any family member of the child;

(ii) Has no personal or professional interest that conflicts with the interest of the child he or she represents; and

(iii) Has knowledge and skills that ensure adequate representation of the child.

(e) *Non-employee requirement; compensation.* A person who is otherwise qualified to be a surrogate parent under paragraph (d) of this section is not an employee of the agency solely because he or she is paid by the agency to serve as a surrogate parent.

(f) *Surrogate parent responsibilities.* The surrogate parent has the same rights as a parent for all purposes under this part.

(g) *Lead agency responsibility.* The lead agency must make reasonable efforts to ensure the assignment of a surrogate parent not more than 30 days

after a public agency determines that the child needs a surrogate parent.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1439(a)(5))

DISPUTE RESOLUTION OPTIONS

**§ 303.430 State dispute resolution options.**

(a) *General.* Each statewide system must include written procedures for the timely administrative resolution of complaints through mediation, State complaint procedures, and due process hearing procedures, described in paragraphs (b) through (e) of this section.

(b) *Mediation.* Each lead agency must make available to parties to disputes involving any matter under this part the opportunity for mediation that meets the requirements in § 303.431.

(c) *State complaint procedures.* Each lead agency must adopt written State complaint procedures to resolve any State complaints filed by any party regarding any violation of this part that meet the requirements in §§ 303.432 through 303.434.

(d) *Due process hearing procedures.* Each lead agency must adopt written due process hearing procedures to resolve complaints with respect to a particular child regarding any matter identified in § 303.421(a), by either adopting—

(1) The part C due process hearing procedures under section 639 of the Act that—

(i) Meet the requirements in §§ 303.435 through 303.438; and

(ii) Provide a means of filing a due process complaint regarding any matter listed in § 303.421(a); or

(2) The part B due process hearing procedures under section 615 of the Act and §§ 303.440 through 303.449 (with either a 30-day or 45-day timeline for resolving due process complaints, as provided in § 303.440(c)).

(e) *Status of a child during the pendency of a due process complaint.* (1) During the pendency of any proceeding involving a due process complaint under paragraph (d) of this section, unless the lead agency and parents of an infant or toddler with a disability otherwise agree, the child must continue to receive the appropriate early intervention services in the setting identified

in the IFSP that is consented to by the parents.

(2) If the due process complaint under paragraph (d) of this section involves an application for initial services under part C of the Act, the child must receive those services that are not in dispute.

(Approved by Office of Management and Budget under control number 1820-0678 and 1820-NEW)

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1415(e), 1415(f)(1)(A), 1415(f)(3)(A)-(D), 1439)

MEDIATION

**§ 303.431 Mediation.**

(a) *General.* Each lead agency must ensure that procedures are established and implemented to allow parties to disputes involving any matter under this part, including matters arising prior to the filing of a due process complaint, to resolve disputes through a mediation process at any time.

(b) *Requirements.* The procedures must meet the following requirements:

(1) The procedures must ensure that the mediation process—

(i) Is voluntary on the part of the parties;

(ii) Is not used to deny or delay a parent's right to a due process hearing, or to deny any other rights afforded under part C of the Act; and

(iii) Is conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator who is trained in effective mediation techniques.

(2)(i) The State must maintain a list of individuals who are qualified mediators and knowledgeable in laws and regulations relating to the provision of early intervention services.

(ii) The lead agency must select mediators on a random, rotational, or other impartial basis.

(3) The State must bear the cost of the mediation process, including the costs of meetings described in paragraph (d) of this section.

(4) Each session in the mediation process must be scheduled in a timely manner and must be held in a location that is convenient to the parties to the dispute.

(5) If the parties resolve a dispute through the mediation process, the parties must execute a legally binding